

Message Text

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PAGE 01 ROME 05762 071407Z
ACTION EUR-12

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INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02
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FM AMEMBASSY ROME
TO SECSTATE WASHDC PRIORITY 3849
INFO AMCONSUL FLORENCE
AMCONSUL GENOA
AMCONSUL MILAN
AMCONSUL NAPLES

C O N F I D E N T I A L ROME 5762

3.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PINT, PINS, IT
SUBJECT: CONTINUING CLIMATE OF VIOLENCE IN ITALY AS PARLIAMENT
BEGINS DISCUSSION OF POLICE REFORM

REF: A) ROME 3043, B) ROME 2620, C) ROME 4147

SUMMARY: CRIMES OF VIOLENCE, BOTH POLITICALLY AND CRIMINALLY
MOTIVATED, CONTINUE UNABATED IN ITALY. ON THE NIGHT OF
APRIL 5 IN NAPLES GUIDO DE MARTINO, SECRETARY OF THE NAPLES
PSI FEDERATION AND SON OF FRANCESCO DE MARTINO, EX-PSI
PARTY SECREATRY WAS KIDNAPPED. LEFTWING TERRORISTS HAVE
CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE CRIME. THE CLIMATE OF
VIOLENCE THREATENS TO FURTHER DESTABILIZE AN ALREADY TENSE
POLITICAL SITUATION. AT THE SAME TIME, ATTACKS ON POLICEMENT
HAVE SERIOUSLY DEMORALIZED THE FORCES OF ORDER AND HAVE LED
TO PROTEST ACTIONS BY POLICE, RESULTING IN THE DISCHARGE
OF A NUMBER OF PUBBLICA SICUREZZA AGENTS. AGAINST THIS
BACKDROP THE INTERIOR COMMITTEE OF THE CHAMBER OF
DEPUTIES MET APRIL 6 TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR THE
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PAGE 02 ROME 05762 071407Z

DEMILITARIZATION AND REFORM OF PUBBLICA SICUREZZA.
END SUMMARY.

1. POLITICAL AND CRIMINAL VIOLENCE THROUGHOUT ITALY
CONTINUES TO RECEIVE WIDE MEDIA COVERAGE WHICH CONTRI-
BUTES TO THE GENERAL ATMOSPHERE OF TENSION AND INSTABILITY.
ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 4 IN TRENTO CARABINIERI ENGAGED

IN A SHOOTOUT WITH A YOUNG EXTORTIONIST THAT LEFT THE CRIMINAL DEAD AND FOUR CARABINIERI SERIOUSLY WOUNDED. IN ROME A POWERFUL EXPLOSIVE DEVICE WAS DETONATED NEAR REGINA COELI PRISON, BUT THE MOST SPECTACULAR INCIDENT OF RECENT DAYS OCCURRED ON THE NIGHT OF APRIL 5 IN NAPLES WHERE GUIDO DE MARTINO, SECRETARY OF THE NAPLES PSI ORGANIZATION AND SON OF EX-PSI PARTY SECRETARY FRANCESCO DE MARTINO WAS ABDUCTED. THE ARMED PROLETARIAN NUCLEI (NAP), LEFTWING URBAN TERRORISTS, HAVE CLAIMED RESPONSIBILITY FOR THE KIDNAPPING. WHILE THE VIOLENT STUDENT DEMONSTRATIONS WHICH LAST MONTH SEEMED TO VERGE ON OPEN REVOLT HAVE SUBSIDED FOR THE PRESENT, BOMBINGS, KIDNAPPINGS, BANK ROBBERIES, AND ATTACKS ON POLICEMEN AND GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS HAVE CONTINUED UNABATED.

2. DESPITE SOME RECENT SUCCESSES IN INDIVIDUAL CASES AND RECENTLY PROMULGATED DECREE LAWS DESIGNED TO ALLOW POLICE TO MAKE PREVENTIVE RAIDS ON SUSPECTED TERRORISTS, THE MORALE OF THE FORCES OF ORDER IN ITALY HAS FALLEN, PARTICULARLY AMONG THE AGENTS OF PUBBLICA SICUREZZA, THE NATIONAL POLICE ORGANIZATION OF THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. THE EXTENT OF THE DISCONTENT WAS UNDERLINED LAST WEEK WHEN A GROUP OF POLICEMEN BROKE AWAY FROM THE FUNERAL CORTEGE OF A COMRADE WHO WAS KILLED IN THE LINE OF DUTY TO THROW A MOURNING WREATH SENT BY PRESIDENT LEONE ONTO THE STEPS OF PALAZZO VIMINALE WHICH HOUSES THE INTERIOR MINISTRY. THIRTEEN OF THE DEMONSTRATORS WERE DISCHARGED FROM THE FORCE AS A RESULT OF THE INCIDENT.

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PAGE 03 ROME 05762 071407Z

DENT.

3. AGAINST THIS BACKDROP OF VIOLENCE AND DEMORALIZATION IN THE NATIONAL POLICE, THE CHAMBER OF DEputies INTERIOR COMMITTEE MET ON APRIL 6 TO DISCUSS PROPOSALS FOR THE DEMILITARIZATION AND REFORM OF PUBBLICA SICUREZZA. THE DC INTRODUCED A SUBSTANTIALLY REVISED VERSION OF THE PROPOSALS FOR REFORM PUT FORWARD BY INTERIOR MINISTER COSSIGA IN FEBRUARY WHICH MET WITH STRONG OPPOSITION WITHIN THE PARTY. THE DC MEASURE CALLS FOR A DEMILITARIZATION OF THE POLICE AND THE FORMATION OF A PROFESSIONAL ORGANIZATION WHICH WOULD BE INDEPENDENT OF THE CISL-CGIL-UIL FEDERATION AND WHICH WOULD BE DENIED THE RIGHT TO STRIKE. THE DRAFT WAS IMMEDIATELY ATTACKED BY THE PSI AS "ANTI-REFORM" AND AS A CURTAILMENT OF THE CIVIL RIGHTS OF THE POLICE AGENTS. THE COMMITTEE WILL CONSIDER DRAFT LAWS FOR POLICE REFORM SUBMITTED BY THE DC, THE PCI, THE PSI, AND THE RADICALS.

4. COMMENT. CONTINUED POLITICAL AND CRIMINAL VIOLENCE AND THE FACT THAT A KEDNAPPING HAS NOW TOUCHED THE FAMILY OF A PROMINENT POLITICIAN HAVE HEIGHTENED THE PUBLIC'S PREOCCUPATION WITH THE PROBLEM AND THREATEN TO FURTHER DESTABILIZE AN ALREADY TENSE POLITICAL SITUATION. MEANWHILE PROGRESS ON POLICE REFORM IS SLOW. THE PROPOSED LAW SUBMITTED BY THE DC WAS CLEARLY A RUSHED EFFORT PUT TOGETHER TO MEET THE DEADLINE IMPOSED BY THE OPENING OF DISCUSSIONS ON POLICE REFORM. THE DC AS A WHOLE WAS CLEARLY NOT PREPARED TO ACCEPT A NUMBER OF COSSIGA'S REFORM PROPOSALS BUT THE DELAY AND INDECISION ON THE PART OF THE PARTY IN PRODUCING AN ACCEPTABLE DRAFT LAW SUGGEST THAT THE DC HAD DIFFICULTY FORMULATING A CLEAR RESPONSE TO DEMANDS FOR REFORM.GARDNER

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